CLASSIFICATION OFFICE DECISION

Title of publication:	Eternal Nightmare Of Hades
Other known title(s):	Not stated
OFLC ref:	1001189.000
Medium:	Artwork
Artist:	Matt Hunt
Country of origin:	Not stated
Language:	Not applicable
Applicant:	Larsarah Lisa Burney
Classification:	Unrestricted.
Descriptive note:	None
Display conditions:	None
Date of entry in Register:	09 August 2010
Date of direction to issue a label:	No direction to issue a label has been issued

Summary of reasons for decision:

"Eternal Nightmare Of Hades" is a 2007 painted work on canvas by New Zealand artist Matt Hunt. It draws on established concepts of hell. Human figures are shown being tormented by somewhat comical fantasy creatures and robots in a busy, colourful scene. The artwork was submitted to the Office of Film and Literature Classification (Classification Office) under s13(1)(c) of the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 (FVPC Act), by a member of the public. Two other works were also submitted.

The publication deals with matters of cruelty, horror and violence in such a way that its unrestricted availability will not be injurious to the public good. The stronger elements of the artwork may be challenging to some children. However, most children are unlikely to be shocked or greatly disturbed by the depictions. A number of elements limit the impact of the material. The painting is representational, but unrealistic – it is clearly a hand-painted work with a colourful, comical style. The work has a humorous quality, with fantasy and science-fiction creatures, as well as inserting unexpected, incongruous and absurd elements. This keeps the tone light, rendering the stronger elements innocuous. It references older, better known works that also depict hell, and does so in a tongue-in-cheek way that is self-evident.

The work is exhibited in a controlled, formal environment that both informs and mediates

viewership.

The Classification Office has taken into account the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act when making this decision. Whilst it is acknowledged that some viewers may find the depiction challenging, injury to the public good from its unrestricted availability is unlikely. The NZBR Act states that everyone has the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and opinions of any kind in any form. Under s5 of the NZBR Act, this freedom is subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. The publication has significant cultural and social merit as an important work by a highly regarded New Zealand artist. There is limited likelihood of unmediated access to the work by children. There is also limited likelihood of harm on any occasion where a child might examine the work in detail and unsupervised. Given these considerations, restricting the work's availability is not warranted.